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Lenten exhortation from Bishop Joseph Li Shan of Beijing

"Take up the mission of evangelization that Christ has entrusted to us; accompany the catechumens; perform works of charity so as to become 'a new Paul'." These were the main points in the '2009 Lenten Message for the Diocese of Beijing' written by Bishop Joseph Li Shan of Beijing, dated February 25, 2009, Ash Wednesday.

The text reads: "Every year, Lent offers a great opportunity that allows us to intensify our prayer, make sacrifices, practice charity, opening our hearts and accepting the Will of God with docility." "The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the II Vatican Council has showed us that Lent should be a time of fervent listening to the Word of God and concentration on prayer to prepare for the celebration of the Paschal Mystery through the remembrance of our Baptism or preparation for Baptism, through sacrifices."

The Bishop of Beijing highlighted that "last year, the Church in Beijing had **over 2,000 newly baptized Catholics**. During Easter this year, we will have another large number of newly baptized." Thus, he encourages the priests and faithful of each parish to "make a maximum effort in preparing the rite of the catechumens, helping them to enter into an authentic interior conversion towards Christ through our accompaniment and their preparation; making them unite their lives more and more to the death and resurrection of Christ, on the path of adhesion to the Church, to strip themselves of the 'old self' and put on a 'new self' in Christ."

"The Apostle Saint Paul says: 'woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!' (1 Cor 9:16). This phrase exhorts us once more in this Year of Saint Paul. The Universal Church is ardently celebrating the Year of Saint Paul, in honor of the 2,000th anniversary of his birth."



Mgr. Joseph Li Shan
Bishop of Beijing

Consecrated on
Sept 21, 2007,
recognized by the
Chinese government
and by the Holy See.

The Bishop continued: "I hope that every parish in our diocese can begin a new wave of evangelization and pastoral commitment in these final months of the Year of St. Paul. Every parish should organize catechism classes, Bible studies, making the parish more active. Thus, our life will more readily adhere to the task of evangelization and faith. The parishes that can, should organize a course for training catechists, in order to form a greater number of the faithful who participate in the pastoral and evangelization commitments, so that the more faithful can become '**new Pauls**'."

"Evangelization is the mission that Christ has entrusted to us. Accompanying the catechumens is our duty and responsibility, and Charity is the basis for all that. And this is the theme that I wish to present to you for meditating on this Lent. I hope that each one of you can intensify his or her prayer, sacrifices, works of charity, listening to the Word of God and opening your hearts to receive the will of God with docility during this sacred time, with the help of God's Grace."

Lastly, "we invoke **Our Lady, Help of Christians**, excellent model of disciple and bright star of the evangelization, so that through her intercession and our effort, we can live Lent well."

[Agenzia Fides]

Religious Issues

Religious Policy in China Today

During the winter quarter, more exactly on December 19, 2008, we were given a clear confirmation that the Chinese authorities did not agree to dismantle the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) as it had been requested by Pope Benedict XVI in his Pastoral Letter of June 2007.

That day, in the presence of high officials of the government, of the United Front of the Communist Party and of the Bureau of Religious Affairs gathered in the Great Hall of the People, Mr. Anthony LIU Bainian, vice-president of the CCPA, presided at an important conference celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the foundation of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association. This solemn celebration of the independence and self-governance of the Chinese Church and of the ordination of the Chinese bishops without the approval of the Holy See was the last in a succession of signals, and somehow the final response coming from China to the Vatican: China will continue its Religious Policy and will not implement it without the use of the Patriotic Association of the Catholic Church. No exception will be given to the Pope, no more than to the Dalai Lama, or to Muslims in Xinjiang.

There was no official reaction from the Vatican. No protest, no accusation, no complaint, as if the Vatican diplomacy had chosen to continue **"the sincere and frank dialogue" begun with the Chinese authorities**, instead of inviting the Chinese Catholics to resistance like Falungong or to uprising like in Tibet or in Xinjiang.

In Hong Kong, Cardinal Zen Zekiun wrote a letter on St. Stephen's Feast Day to the Chinese bishops registered with the government inviting them not to give in, and to be more courageous in opposing the pressure from the regime.

For us at the US Catholic China Bureau, we have to accept the fact that our desire to see China and the Vatican coming to a common agreement and establishing diplomatic relations did not come to fruition this time. Yet, we still hope to see this become reality some day. In our prayer we asked the Father to please take this cup of suffering from us. Yet we say "not what we want but what You want."

Without diplomatic relations, and agreement between Beijing and Vatican City, **there are many things the**

Church can still do in China. This is what we read on the front page of this issue of CCQ, the pastoral Letter for Lent by Mgr. Li Shan, Bishop of Beijing.

While we pray for the day the Catholic Church in China will enjoy complete religious freedom, we can still continue joyfully our partnership with the Church in China in the field of pastorals and evangelization.

US Human Rights Report :2008

This report, prepared annually under the auspices of the US Dept. of Labor, covers a broad spectrum of human rights issues in many countries around the world, including the Peoples' Republic of China – with appendices for Tibet, Hong Kong and Macau.

As has been widely and frequently reported in western media, the situation in the PRC is judged to have regressed in comparison to previous years. In part, this is attributed to China being so much on the spotlight last year because of many dramatic events - both spectacular and calamitous – eg. staging the Olympics and the Sichuan Earthquake aftermath.

On the issue of **Religious Freedoms**, in context, the PRC scarcely distinguishes religious organizations from any other social organization, social policy and laws were strictly enforced at all levels and restrictions were tightened, especially at provincial and local levels.

In regard to the **Catholic Church in China**, the situation remained about status quo on quasi-politico-ecclesial relations between Vatican-PRC; with continued recourse to a modus vivendi for appointment of diocesan bishops. In face of the global economic downturn and resultant socio-economic crises, churches have found increased space for social ministry outreach. Web Access: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/ris/hrrpt/2008/eaqp/119037/htm>

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Church News

Chinese Added to Holy See Website

An English-language communique published today by the Holy See Press Office explains that, "the official website of the Holy See will be enhanced by the addition of a new section in Chinese".

Chinese "will be the eighth language to be represented on the **www.vatican.va** website, which also includes Italian, English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese and Latin.

"Thanks to the new service", the communique concludes, "internet users from throughout the world will be able to navigate in Chinese to access the texts of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI which will be available in both traditional and simplified Chinese characters".

[Mar 16, 09 VIS]

Auction of Jesuit-designed sculptures

Chinese Catholics have expressed sadness that two bronze animal-head sculptures, designed by a Jesuit missionary for Beijing's Summer Palace in the 18th century, were auctioned off in Paris. They say they are disappointed that the law court in the French capital rejected an appeal to ban the auction. Mainland Chinese lawyers filed their appeal through a France-based Chinese cultural group. Each of the sculptures, used as waterspouts in the Summer Palace, was sold for 14 million euros (US\$17.8 million) on Feb. 25.

Italian Jesuit Brother **Giuseppe Castiglione** (1688-1766), known as **Lang Shining** to the Chinese, designed the sculptures for the Yuanmingyuan, a royal garden at the Summer Palace. They were plundered by British and French forces in 1860.

A priest from Hebei province, northern China, recalled his visit to Yuanmingyuan in 2000. "In front of me was a scene of devastation with broken bricks and walls, which deeply pains my heart," he remarked. "I think every Chinese who has visited this park will have the same feeling." The priest, who requested anonymity, said although the Chinese lawyers failed in their legal action, their attempt to recover lost cultural relics overseas sets a precedent for the future. He rejected the demand of Pierre Berge, former owner of the sculptures, who had said he wanted China to observe human rights, give liberty to the Tibetan people

and welcome the Dalai Lama in exchange for the sculptures. The priest said that using religion and human rights to obscure the thefts of the past



"reminds me of a similar pretext the Anglo-French forces used for their colonial aggression to protect Church missionaries." According to him, the ultimate victims of colonialism were the helpless missionaries, unarmed Catholics and the "innocent Church that was branded an accomplice of the foreign forces."

Mary Pei, a Catholic student in Beijing, noted that "the French admitted they robbed the items from China but they still turned down our petition." For her, this is because China still lacks influence. "I pray that our nation will grow stronger," she asserted.

A Catholic layman in eastern China has a different view. Even though the Chinese sculptures are overseas, he said, they are nevertheless well preserved. He noted that many Catholic monuments and buildings in China were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and wondered whether anyone has been held accountable for this.

According to Zong Tianliang, spokesperson of Beijing's Yuanmingyuan Park Administration Office, British and French forces looted the bronze sculptures when they burned down the palace in 1860 during the Second Opium War. He said the sculptures hold a lot of historical and cultural meaning for the Chinese nation, and auctioning them deeply hurts the Chinese people.

The Yuanmingyuan, one of three royal gardens of the Qing emperors' Summer Palace, was designed and constructed under the supervision of Brother Castiglione, under the imperial edict of Emperor Qianlong, who reigned from 1736 to 1795. Inside the garden, 12 waterspouts in the shape of bronze animal heads with human bodies representing the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac adorned a fountain. The auctioned animal heads were two of the artifacts.

Brother Castiglione came to China in 1715. He served as a court painter for 51 years until he died.

[UCAN]

Superiors Visit Earthquake Zone

"Thank you and keep up the good work! You spread Christ's love, participating in His work of Redemption." This is what Superior Generals of the 11 Chinese religious congregations of sisters of the province of He Bei, in their visit to the earthquake area, told their sisters and volunteer workers who continue providing aid in the area that was devastated by a quake on May 12, 2008, in collaboration with Jinde Charities, the Chinese Catholic charitable organization. Today, nearly 8 months after the earthquake, the religious continue working in the area, and **they are nearly the last of the rescue workers that remain.**

The Superiors visited the most affected areas, bringing consolation and love to all and being thanked by the local authorities and local people who are still living in provisional refuge areas. One district leader said, "Jinde (Charities) has been approved by people of all ethnic backgrounds and religious beliefs. Your 4 centers for psychological and moral support have been a great consolation and help to us. We have been moved by all your work. Thank you."

The sisters went to the cemetery to pray for all the victims of the tragedy. During the visit, Sr. Zhang Ai Xiang, President of the Association of Superior Generals of He Bei said: "saving lives is a difficult mission. However, after the first rescue effort, the mission of consoling so many people's hearts and encouraging them to keep going forward, is even more difficult. What you have done and continue doing is spread the love of Christ." [Agenzia Fides Jan 16, 09]



Pathways to Christian Unity

The winning essay in an international competition organized by the *World Council of Churches among Christian youth*, examines the development and progress made by the Christian Churches of China to become a "united Christian Church without any denominational distinctions." The essay was submitted by **GU Mengfei** of the staff of the China Christian Council/TSPM who holds a MA in Religion and Philosophy from Beijing University. This brief synopsis is taken from *AmityNewsService* Dec. 2008.

Chinese Christian churches, eager to put behind them denominational rivalries of the past, [sadly exacerbated by the strong influence of foreign missionaries,] are working to remove the obstacles to church unity and responding to Christ's prayer "that all may be one."

The author observes that the PM [*Three-Self Patriotic Movement*], set up by the government in the 1950s, despite its strictures, actually catalyzed some members of various Christian denominations in China to discover **a new consensus in matters of faith.** Believers of different denominational backgrounds also began to enjoy joint worship. In 1958, united worship was initiated at the grassroots level by several churches in Zhejiang Province; others soon followed. GU Mengfei credits the growth in Christian unity to a number of sources. Culturally, Chinese Christians traditionally hold strong belief in biblical teachings on unity, and are naturally drawn towards peace and reconciliation.

Historically, while church leaders were laying the cornerstone for united worship, contextually, the TSPM, in its mandate to eliminate foreign control, also served to dilute denominational influences. Several **other occurrences gave impetus to the united movement:** the 1952 merger of twelve different denominational theological seminaries in East China to form JinLing Union Theological Seminary in Nanjing; the merger of another seven in North China into Yanjing Union in Beijing in 1953. Ironically, even the 1958 *Great Leap Forward* worked in favor of uniting churches, by forcing the various denominations to merge their resources. Although the *Cultural Revolution* [1966-76] suppressed all public worship, when churches reopened in the early eighties Christians, exulting in their new found freedom to praise and worship God as communities, readily adapted to a unified style of worship and prayer acceptable to most Christians.

Subsequently, *a new unified Hymnal, a Catechism of 100 Q&A on Christian Faith, a revised Christian Church Order*, officially promulgated in 1997, and calling for "seeking the common ground, while respecting differences" served in effect to foster unity, without imposing uniformity. GU comments on these historical developments and documents, admitting that "there is no blueprint to follow in the era of post denominationalism". GU also calls for development of more rounded theology, which combined with **ecumenical principles, can strengthen the ecclesiological basis of a fully unified Chinese Christian Church.** Perhaps Christian churches all over the world, may find in the example of Chinese Christians today - a pathway to Christian unity.

[Sr. Janet Carroll, MM]



Social Issues

A Chinese Document of Human Rights : Charter '08

Charter '08 was published in China on the eve of December 10, 2008 to coincide with the Sixtieth Anniversary of the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights Charter. An English translation of the nearly 4,000 word Chinese document written by Princeton scholar Perry Link in January 15, 2009 *The New York Review of Books* found at www.nybooks.com/articles/22210 sets the context.

Part 1: the Foreword. Contemporary China watchers see a link of **Charter '08** to the Democracy Wall in Beijing, to China's signing of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and to the 1989 Tiananmen massacre of pro-democracy student protesters. Yet, **Charter '08** recalls the China modernization debates around the short-lived 1898 Constitution, the end of the Qing dynasty in the 1911 Revolution, the reformist and student 1919 May Fourth Movement, and even Mao Zedong's 1949 world announcement of the People's Republic of China.

Part 2: Fundamental Principles. Points pressed for include: Freedom, Human Rights, Equality or "the integrity, dignity, and freedom of every person." Also, Republicanism "which holds that power should be balanced among different branches of government and competing interests should be served and resembles the traditional Chinese political ideal of fairness in all under heaven. Democracy is another. Its characteristics are (1) Political power begins with the people and the legitimacy of a regime derives from the people. (2) Political power is exercised through choices that the people make. (3) The holders of major official posts in government at all levels are determined through periodic competitive elections. (4) The will of the majority is honored and the fundamental dignity, freedom, and human rights of minorities are protected. In short, democracy is a modern means for achieving government truly "of the people, by the people, and for the people." This goes hand in hand with the principle of Constitutional Rule as manifested through a legal system and regulations to implement principles that are spelled out in a constitution.

Part 3: What We Advocate. "As responsible and constructive citizens, we offer the following recommendations on national governance, citizens' rights, and social development:" A New Constitution, Separation of Powers, Legislative Democracy, Independent Judiciary, Public Control of Public Servants, Guarantee of Human Rights, Election of Public Officials, Rural-Urban Equality, Freedom to Form Groups, to Assemble, Freedom of Expression,

of Religion, Civic Education, Protection of Private Property, Financial and Tax Reform, Social Security, Protection of the Environment, A Federated Republic, Truth in Reconciliation.

Concluding Points: At first, Perry Link reported **Charter '08** was signed only by citizens of the People's Republic of China residing in China. In time, he learned Chinese living outside China have signed a letter of strong support for the document. Among them are noted historian Yu Ying-shih, astrophysicist Fang Lizhi, writers Ha Jin and Zheng Yi. By December 18, 2008 160 others had signed their names and on December 12, the Dalai Lama issued his own letter in support of the charter, writing that "a harmonious society can only come into being when there is trust among the people, freedom from fear, freedom of expression, rule of law, justice, and equality." He called on the Chinese government to release prisoners "who have been detained for exercising their freedom of expression."

Significance of Charter '08: It has raised a multitude of Chinese voices to assert principles of human rights and democracy that mirror the language of Amnesty International, established in 1961, as well as numerous United Nations documents that seek international and local application of human rights and democracy.

December 17, 2008 AsiaNews reported that former Communist official Bao Tong advocated that Beijing should explain how **Charter '08** violates the law. On February 10, 2009, Hong Kong based UCAN News announced the Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese and other rights activists have called for Beijing to stop harassing signatories of **Charter '08**. On February 15, 2009 the *Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* called for the release of Liu Xiaobo, a writer and political commentator in China who had been arrested just prior to the December 2008 release of **Charter '08**.

China, however, has offered steadfast criticism of **Charter '08** as a legitimate voice. Reuters reported a January 18, 2009 headline: "Erroneous" Western democracy not for China," while BBC News on March 9, 2009 told that a speech by Chinese Parliament chief Wu Bangguo to the National People's Congress stated existing Chinese principles "will not have democracy" and instead would draw on the achievements of all cultures but would not "simply copy" the West.

Certainly, **Charter '08** has spawned dialogue and debate in and out of China.

[Father Rob Carbonneau, C.P., Ph.D.]

Chronology of China: 1978-2008

In December, China celebrated the 30th anniversary of the start of economic reforms that have transformed the country into a global economic and trading power. The following chronology highlights important milestones since then.

1978: Economic, social and cultural reforms launched under Deng Xiaoping, two years after the death of Mao Zedong. GDP per capita is 381 yuan.

1979: U.S. and China establish diplomatic relations. One-child policy introduced.

1980: First special economic zone established in Shenzhen.

1982: Population surpasses 1 billion.

1986: Deng promotes "open-door" policy to encourage foreign investment.

1988: Spiraling inflation and corruption prompt limits on foreign investment and monetary flows.

1989: Students protest in Tiananmen Square to demand economic, political and social change. Hundreds believed killed in ensuing crackdown.

1990: Communist China's first stock exchange opens in Shanghai.

1992: Deng makes southern China tour to relaunch economic reforms in face of criticism from conservatives.

1994: China connects to the Internet.

1996: Chinese currency becomes convertible.

1997: Deng dies. Jiang Zemin takes over. China regains control of Hong Kong.

1998: China injects \$500 billion into its faltering banking sector.

1999: Government outlaws Falun Gong.

2001: China joins the World Trade Organization.

2002: Entrepreneurs allowed to join the Communist Party.

2003: Hu Jintao replaces Jiang as president. SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) breaks out in China and eventually kills nearly 800 worldwide. China's first manned spacecraft orbits the earth.

2004: The United Nations estimates 1 million Chinese are infected with HIV.

2005: China becomes the world's fourth-largest economy. The government stops pegging the currency to the U.S. dollar.

2006: Three Gorges Dam and railway to Tibet are completed. China's foreign exchange reserves reach \$1 trillion, becoming world's largest.

2007: China tops the world with 210 million Internet users. GDP per capita reaches 18,900 yuan (\$2,760).

2008: Sichuan earthquake kills 70,000 people. Beijing hosts Olympic Games.

5 Top Stories of 2008

2008 was an incredible news year for China. Here are a few of the highlights:

5. The Economy: Last year the economy was as one of the "Top China Stories to Watch in 2008," and sure enough, it didn't disappoint. Nobody did anticipate the upcoming financial slowdown, or the way it would influence China in terms of slowing imports and exports. China's GDP growth rate has dipped into single digits for the first time in years, and next year projections anticipate only about a 5% growth rate for the once seemingly unstoppable economy. It will be interesting to see how the economic situation evolves next year, and how China will help shape the global economy.

4. Tibetan Protests: While many pro-Tibetan activist groups have been protesting China's involvement in Tibet for years, the March riots of Tibetan monks took the activism to a new level. The tensions in Tibet didn't just stay there, however, they recurred during the Olympic torch relay, resulting in angry protests and boycotts. While the Tibetan issue has died down, talks between China and the Dalai Lama haven't been overly successful, so there could be more unrest to come.

3. Melamine Milk: China's dairy industry was dealt a harsh blow after hundreds of thousands of infants were sickened by drinking melamine in their baby formulas. The melamine fiasco exposed many weaknesses in China's food safety infrastructure, which authorities are trying to correct. Let's hope it's not too little, too late.

2. The Sichuan Earthquake: May 12, 2008 will forever remain etched in China's memory. With millions homeless, displaced, still missing, or dead, Sichuan Province will never be the same. China's recent stimulus package will provide additional funding for the region, but the improved infrastructure can't replace much of what was lost.

1. The Olympics: Most Chinese refer to it as a dream several centuries in the making, and even with a few kinks, Beijing pulled off a spectacular event. From the nearly flawless opening ceremonies to the tremendous athletic feats of Michael Phelps, Usain Bolt, and a host of other athletes, the Beijing Games were definitely an event to remember. The pressure is definitely on London right now, as these last Olympics will be difficult to top. [CBNnews]

Stability and Economy

2009 marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Maintaining steady economic development, safeguarding social harmony and stability must be given top priority. This is what dominated Premier Wen Jiabao's report to the annual session of China's National People's Congress.

The economies of the United States and China being intertwined, much of China's industrial output ends up in the United States. At the same time, Beijing is one of Washington's main money lenders. China holds in fact US\$ 696 billion in US treasuries, an increase of 46 per cent over the previous year. About **the US debt and China's huge investments in the United States**, Wen Jiabao said: "we are concerned about the safety of our assets. To be honest, I am a little bit worried. I request the US to maintain its good credit, to honour its promises and to guarantee the safety of China's assets."

The economic crisis has already left 20 million workers unemployed. The Chinese government has already prepared a set of measures worth US\$ 585 billion. Mr. Wen said: "any time, we can introduce a new stimulus," adding that we "have reserved adequate ammunition". Yet, doubts have surfaced with regards to the measures' feasibility given the widespread corruption in the party. Scandals and misappropriations of public funds are daily occurrences.

Right now Beijing is concerned about the drastic drop in exports, down 25 per cent over last year, which is having a sobering impact on the real economy as plants close, workers get laid off and social tensions rise. Last year, so-called "mass incidents" (strikes, sit-ins, demonstrations, clashes with police, wounded and killed) as a result of labour problems topped 87,000. The ideal of the "harmonious society" is undergoing a severe challenge. For this reason, those involved in the private sector are being urged to "refrain from laying off any employees, cutting salaries or withholding wages, so as to create a harmonious labor relationship."

So far, at least **20 million people have lost their jobs**. Business owners are closing their facilities without warning, leaving their workers without jobs and often without pay dating back months or even years. This situation is creating tension and clashes with the police and authorities in many regions of China.

Social unrest requires a new early warning system. During the National People's Congress in March, which

coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Tibet uprising, the region was placed under **martial law**. Towns and cities were patrolled by soldiers; the movement of people was made more difficult by checkpoints; the internet was blacked out and many people were arrested.

The harmonious society is also crumbling in Beijing. For the occasion of the two major gatherings of the government, more security personnel have been deployed than during the Olympics. In addition to soldiers and police, there were 600,000 "volunteers" watching every intersection. There were three layers of security around the city to prevent the infiltration of demonstrators or people who want to present petitions at the meetings of the leaders.

Representatives of the ethnic minorities and **the various religions** are asked to cooperate for unity in the country and for religious harmony and to support the policy of the party and the government in controlling uprisings in all parts of the country.

Obama's China Family

Mark Ndesandjo is one of thousands of expatriates living in China. **Kenyan-born Ndesandjo** owns a chain of restaurants called China BBQ in Shenzhen, China, and has been active in the city's charity sector. He's taken the long flight to Washington, DC to witness his half-brother become President of the United States.

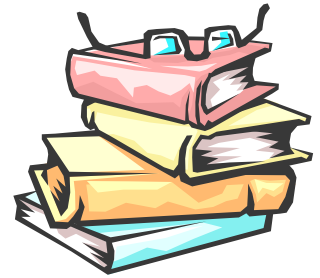
While Barack Obama is among the most famous men in the world, Mark Ndesandjo has kept a much lower profile. He's avoided the press, and made no mention of his famous brother on brochures advertising a fundraiser for orphans he co-chaired last Friday.

Obama and Ndesandjo don't have a close relationship, and have only met a few times. Despite this distance, Ndesandjo's residence provides Obama with a unique China connection. Whether or not the two meet up when the president makes an official visit to China remains to be seen, but at the very least, Obama can share his inaugural day with family from all over the world. [Jan 14, 09 CBN]



Mark Ndesandjo played piano to benefit a Chinese orphanage.

Reading Notes



- **Postcards from Tomorrow's Square: Reports from China** James Fallows
2008. Vintage Books, 262pp. \$14.95pb

Another look into the *huge, elusive country* that is China today, by an author whose essays on China appear regularly in *The Atlantic Monthly*. As recently reviewed in the NY Times, by the distinguished China historian Jonathan Spence, *POSTCARDS*, unlike other recent books using a lens of micro level details, Fallows writes across a board canvas. He recounts how efficiently and swiftly China is re-inventing itself, as it responds to the global and "multifaceted impact of modern technological and financial change". Spence has high praise for the way Fallow's insights on a myriad of topics are right on target. A key message of the book, urges the USA to "make itself open to the Chinese, to develop the areas where mutual collaboration is feasible and valuable... [for] "a meeting of minds from both societies is essential to the well-being of all"

- **China Witness: Voices From a Silent Generation** Xinran.
Pantheon Books, 435pp. translated from Chinese, Illustrated. \$28.95

- **The Vagrants** Yiyun LI. Random House, 337pp. \$25.00

These two books offer contrasting views to *POSTCARDS* presenting detailed portraits of daily life in China during the three decades of cruel repression and suffering (prelude to, and the aftermath of) the Cultural Revolution. While *VAGRANTS* begins with the DENG era, the so called 'spring equinox' in China, it looks backward in a stark, neorealist recounting in grim detail, of the inhumane daily life experiences of rural migrants in a so called 'nowhere' town 700 miles from Beijing.

Although *CHINA WITNESS* begins with the *idealistic* early MAO years, and goes through the dark decades too, it resolves itself in stories from the 'openness and reform' era initiated by DENG XiaoPeng in 1979, sort of Chinese version of 'The Greatest Generation' by Tom Brokaw. In this it is a far more inspiring work, which shows how "China's masses clung to scraps of individuality amid deadening conformity of the Communist system."

Both these authors are younger Chinese woman, writing from the West. They give evidence of the Chinese peoples' willingness to confront their history and learn from it, using stones from the rubble as the foundation for a new and more hopeful China of tomorrow.

- **Collections of Oracle Bones Inscriptions** Jean Lefevre, SJ.
New Series 97. Taiwan: Taipei Ricci Institute, 2008. 593pp. hc \$43.00 [surface postage inc.]

This work, by a world renowned expert in this field, is an analytical catalogue of 412 oracular inscriptions; widely recognized as the most complete repertory of sources related to origins of Chinese writing. [Further info: alexmchentw@yahoo.tw]



"See! The winter is past;
the rains are over and gone.
Flowers appear on the earth;
the season of singing has come,
the cooing of doves is heard in our land.

...
Arise, come, my darling;
my beautiful one, come with me."

(Song of Songs 2)